

DRAFT AGENDA

50th Annual Meeting of the Marine Mammal Commission and 44th Meeting of its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals

**24-27 January 2012
Sheraton Anchorage Hotel
401 East 6th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501**

Tuesday, 24 January

8:30-10:00 I. Executive Session (closed)

10:00-10:30 Break

10:30-10:45 II. Welcome and introductions

10:45-12:30 III. Co-management

- (a) Co-management priorities and perspectives of the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service
- (b) Co-management priorities and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples' Council for Marine Mammals (IPCoMM)
- (c) Identify and discuss actions that the Commission can take to promote better co-management

12:30-1:45 Lunch

1:45-2:45 IV. Effects of climate disruption in the Arctic

Overview of physical, chemical, and biological effects of climate disruption

2:45-3:45 V. Selected U.S. and international research activities in the Arctic

- (a) North Slope Science Initiative
- (b) Arctic Research Commission
- (c) Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee
- (d) Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program
- (e) Arctic Biodiversity Assessment

3:45-4:00 Break

4:00-5:30 VI. Species of special concern

- (a) Bowhead whale (45 minutes)
Update on International Whaling Commission Aboriginal Whaling catch limit review

Hunting efficiency (struck-and-lost) (Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, AEWC)

Domestic legislation on U.S. catch limits of bowheads

(b) Polar bear (30 minutes)

Habitat plan (CAFF)

Review of other regulatory actions (Endangered Species Act 4(d) rule, Critical Habitat)

Development of the recovery plan

(c) North Pacific right whale (15 minutes)

Assessment and status of funding

5:30-5:45 Discussion and wrap up

5:45 Adjourn day 1

Wednesday, 25 January

9:00-11:00 VI. Species of special concern (cont.)

(d) Ice seals (1 hour)

Update on assessment efforts

Status of Endangered Species Act listing for different species

Alaska Native perspective

(e) Pacific walrus (1 hour)

Observed changes in habitat, distribution, feeding, and haul-out patterns

Managing human activities, e.g., near new haul-outs on Alaska coast

Subsistence harvest

U.S.-Russia collaboration on management and assessment

11:00-11:15 Break

11:15-12:00 VI. Species of special concern (cont.)

(f) Cook Inlet beluga whale (45 minutes)

Conservation and management actions to address risk factors, including cumulative effects, and explain decline

Research efforts

Status of Recovery Team

12:00-1:15 Lunch

1:15-1:30 Welcome by Geoff Haskett, Regional Administrator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1:30-2:30 VI. Species of special concern (cont.)

- (g) Southeast Alaska sea otters (1 hour)
Status and fishery conflicts for southeast Alaska stock: fisheries involved
Nature and extent of interactions, management alternatives, H.R. 2714
Allowable handicraft (definition of significantly altered)

2:30-4:00 VII. Health and disease

- (a) Emerging health threats (20 minutes)
- (b) Outbreak response (e.g., ringed seals, walrus) (20 minutes)
- (c) Capacity for disease surveillance and response (20 minutes)
- (d) Discussion and recommendations (30 minutes)

4:00-4:15 Break

4:15-5:15 VIII. Arctic shipping and marine mammals

- (a) Projected changes in Arctic shipping and future management needs to minimize and prevent environmental impacts (15 minutes)
- (b) U.S. Coast Guard: Ongoing and planned management activities (15 minutes)
- (c) Conservation concerns related to Arctic shipping (15 minutes)
- (d) Discussion of research and management priorities

5:15-5:30 Discussion and wrap up

5:30 Adjourn day 2

Thursday, 26 January

9:00-10:40 IX. Arctic oil and gas development

- (a) 5- to 10-year plans for leasing/exploration/development off Alaska (10 minutes)
- (b) Impacts of oil and gas exploration, development, and production on Arctic marine mammals: Noise, disturbance, displacement, ship strikes, exposure to contaminants, other (10 minutes)
- (c) Impacts on availability of marine mammals for subsistence (30 minutes)
- (d) Oil spill contingency planning, worst-case scenarios, and response capabilities in the Arctic marine environment (50 minutes)

10:40-11:00 Break

11:00-12:30 IX. Arctic oil and gas development (cont.)

- (e) Measures to prevent exposure and minimize injury of marine mammals in the event of an oil spill – identifying, capturing, transporting, and rehabilitating them – what is feasible and advisable? (20 minutes)
- (f) Panel discussion of the adequacy of response capabilities to minimize impacts on marine mammals and the roles of industry, government, Alaska Native

communities, and conservation organizations in response activities (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Coast Guard, National Marine Fisheries Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Native organizations, industry, conservation organizations) (60 minutes)

(g) Synthesis (10 minutes)

12:30-2:00 Lunch

2:00-3:30 X. Conservation and research

- (a) Directed discussion of current conservation efforts to identify (1) the most critical problems, (2) their consequences for Alaska Native communities, (3) key considerations for research and management, and (4) a synthetic/big-picture view of common issues and innovative solutions.
- (b) Directed discussion of emerging and impending conservation problems (mostly related to climate disruption) to identify (1) expected proximate vs ultimate impacts(e.g. habitat loss vs decreased survival), (2) possible adaptations (e.g., habitat switching), (3) the consequences for Alaska Native communities, and (4) the changes needed in research and management to address these problems.

3:30-3:45 Break

3:45-4:30 X. Conservation and research (cont.)

4:30-5:00 Conclusions and recommendations

5:00 Adjourn day 3

Friday, 27 January

9:00-4:00 XI. Determining U.S. marine mammal conservation and management priorities (with rest and lunch breaks)

- (a) National Marine Fisheries Service perspective
- (b) Fish and Wildlife Service perspective
- (c) Stock versus species considerations
- (d) Species in U.S. waters versus foreign or international waters
- (e) Criteria for developing priorities
 - (i) A phylogenetic approach
 - (ii) A threats-based approach
 - (iii) A risk-based approach
- (f) Species/issues/threats to give priority to this year

4:00 Meeting wrap up and adjournment